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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**CONTACT:**

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

[press@cityofchicago.org](mailto:press@cityofchicago.org)

**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT INTRODUCES ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING AGREEMENT  
WITH FOREST PRESERVES OF COOK COUNTY TO SUPPORT GREENCORPS  
CHICAGO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot and the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) today introduced an ordinance establishing a new intergovernmental agreement (IGA) with the Forest Preserves of Cook County (FPCC) to continue supporting CDOT's Greencorps Chicago program. Greencorps Chicago is the City's green job training program for individuals with barriers to employment, including returning citizens. Through a nine-month paid program, participants receive classroom and field training at a variety of sites, including locations within the Forest Preserves of Cook County, the Chicago Park District, and other community partners to receive on-the-job training in ecological restoration, green infrastructure, tree care, and landscaping.

The proposed new agreement between CDOT and the Forest Preserves will allow Greencorps to utilize \$1.35M in FPCC American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding awarded over the next two years. This partnership will allow further training opportunities in green infrastructure and ecological restoration best practices in Chicago and increase job placement opportunities available to trainees upon completing the program.

"The City remains strongly committed to creating employment opportunities for all of our residents and removing barriers for those who face challenges entering the job market," said Mayor Lightfoot. "Greencorps Chicago is made possible by the network of relationships with organizations and partners, including the Forest Preserves, which allows participants to gain valuable hands-on experience in the growing green job sector."

Greencorps Chicago works with over 30 public and private sector partners to recruit participants, support job readiness, and provide professional certifications. The program has produced more than 600 graduates in its 29 years of existence and in the last five years has succeeded in placing about 80% of them in jobs. Industry



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partners host internships for the trainees, helping them acquire additional experience that can lead to permanent jobs.

In the classroom, trainees learn about horticulture, ecology, green infrastructure, tree care, pesticide use, and other topics. They then apply those skills through field training that takes place while working on projects for the Forest Preserves of Cook County, Chicago Park District, City vacant lots, Chicago City Colleges, and other project partners.

“Greencorps Chicago provides a potentially life-changing opportunity for Chicagoans who face challenges breaking into the job market,” said CDOT Commissioner Gia Biagi. “And in addition to empowering residents with transferrable job skills, Greencorps supports meaningful projects that promote regional sustainability.”

Greencorps trainees are also offered a range of professional certifications including Defensive Driving, First Aid/CPR, OSHA Hazardous Waste Operator, OSHA 10-Hour Safety, Chicago Wilderness Prescription Burn Class, the Illinois Pesticide license, and others.

Throughout their time with Greencorps, trainees are supported with social services, mentoring, and professional coaching, increasing their ability to secure full time employment upon completion of the training.

Trainees also have access to a placement coordinator that works with graduates to identify successful employment matches and post placement follow-up and to a social worker. Greencorps grads have gone on to work at the Chicago Park District, ecological restoration company Cardno, the Forest Preserves of Cook County, and many other businesses and organizations.

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